

# MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE TYPE b (Hib) INFORMATION SHEET

### **What is Hib disease?**

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) disease is a serious disease caused by a bacteria which usually strikes children under 5 years of age. Hib disease is very rare today because of widespread vaccination with the Hib vaccine. Hib disease can cause meningitis (an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings), pneumonia, an infection of the blood and joints, and even death.

### **Who can get Hib disease?**

Children under 5 years of age who have not been vaccinated against Hib disease or who have not yet completed the entire vaccination series. Children who have completed the vaccination series are unlikely to get Hib disease.

### **What are the symptoms of Hib disease?**

Children with Hib disease can experience a fever, headache, and stiff neck. Nausea and vomiting can also occur.

### **How long after exposure do symptoms first begin?**

Symptoms usually begin 2-4 days after exposure. Not all children who have been exposed to Hib disease will become ill.

### **How is Hib disease spread?**

The bacteria are spread from person to person. If the bacteria stay in a child's nose and throat, the child probably will not get sick. But sometimes the bacteria spread into the lungs or the blood and then Hib can cause serious disease.

### **How long is a person contagious?**

A child can transmit the bacteria to others as long as the bacteria are present in the nose and throat. Children cannot transmit the bacteria 24-48 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment.

### **Are there complications?**

Hib meningitis can cause brain damage and deafness. Hib disease can also lead to death. Before Hib vaccine became available, about 20,000 children in the United States under 5 years of age got severe Hib disease each year and nearly 1,000 died.

### **Is there treatment for Hib disease?**

Hib disease can be treated with antibiotics but even with treatment some children will experience complications and even die from the disease.

### **How can Hib disease be prevented?**

Hib disease can be prevented by vaccination. All healthy children should be vaccinated at 2, 4, 6, and 12-15 months of age.